3: Low G-5 (1844-1847) 1848
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with split rattans fastened into a frame-work, and supported by four posts, over which also the roof is extended: a mat is placed under the sieve, and the heads of padi, being put into it above, are worked backwards and forwards over the fine rattans of the sieve with a wooden instrument which they have for the purpose, until the padi, being freed from the stalks, falls into the receptacle below, whence it is taken, and being well dried in the sun, is finally conveyed to the granary of the family, until wanted for the purposes of trade and of home consumption.

Every year the series of operations above detailed is repeated; the soil, perhaps, being exhausted by the enormous crop it sometimes produces in favourable seasons. Last year was one of those, and I saw hundreds of acres of padi which had fallen to the ground for want of hands to gather it; the crop having been so much larger than the Dyaks, who generally calculate these matters very shrewdly, and plant no more than their own family can conveniently manage, had anticipated. The Dyaks themselves, however, do not suppose that the soil is in any way incapable of bearing further culture; but give always as a reason for deserting their farms, that the weeds and grass which immediately spring up after the padi has been gathered, are less easily eradicated, than ground occupied by old jungle is prepared. They never return to the same spot until after a period of seven years has elapsed, which they say was the custom of their an-

3: Low G-5 (1844 1847) 1848
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242 cestors; and then they find that the trees, which have,
243 during that time, covered the ground, to the destruction of the deleterious lalang grass and other weeds, are easily felled, and the ground prepared; though, as has been before noticed, the crops from such land are not so abundant as those from the 'utan tuah,' or old forest, which in consequence is, notwithstanding the greater proportionate amount of labour requisite to bring it under cultivation, always, when procurable, preferred.

243 It will be seen from the above statement that the farms of the Dyaks are prepared towards the end of the dry season, so that they have the wet monsoon to bring the padi to maturity, and the beginning of the following fine weather, April and May, to ripen the grain. Some tribes have a succession of farms coming in a few weeks later than each other, but never more than three. The hill Dyaks seldom plant their farms till a month or two later than the sea tribes, who consequently have the first of the market; new rice always selling for a higher price than the old, the former being esteemed sweeter and more nourishing by the Malays, who are the purchasers.

251 From the mode of pounding the padi in mortars, to free it from the husk, adopted by the Dyaks and Malays, none of the rice, the produce of the island, can be kept for any length of time: the grains being broken, and the enamel which protects them from the wevil being destroyed, that insect soon takes advantage of the circumstance to attack and destroy it; in the

221 243 are to get rice, we can't be much ahead or much behind other people"), for the individual farmer who is early or late will have his crop ravaged by the ubiquitous sparrows. If the rice progresses at about the same rate of growth, among a number of fields, the loss for any one field is less.

221 243 782 By the middle of June, the work of clearing the farm sites is begun. The inaugaration of this work is marked with an offering to protect the workers from injury and so that no bad omen will be perceived requiring them to call off work and move to another site. The offering (piring, v.f. miring) as on most occasions consists of popped rice (rendai), rice cakes, (sentupat, sungki), tobacco (semakau), betel leaves and nuts (pinang,sirih), and eggs (telu'), placed in a basket eight inches square and four inches deep (kelingkang) made of plaited bamboo (buloh) or rattan (ui).

242 243 The task of clearing lowland sites near the river banks is much easier than clearing virgin jungle or even secondary growth in hilly areas. At Sungai Aup, where the same sites are farmed year after year, clearing is done with sprayers and herbicides. The proximity to Sibu and the availability of cheap transportation has permitted the Ibans at Aup to purchase pack-sprayers and chemical sprays to kill the grasses. Within two days after spraying, the farms are rolled (dibelat) with 55 gallon drums filled with water, pressing the dead grasses and stubble into the soil. Those who do not over-dilute the sprays are assured of a quick

242 wilting of the grasses. Some, however, put too much water with the
243 sprays, practicing a false economy (luki') by other Ibans' own estimates, so that the spraying is not effective and the task of weeding more difficult.

243 In most farms land still is cleared with ilok, pitu' and duku',
412 and the cut grasses and stubble left to dry before being fired. The use of these conventional tools is due in part to a greater difficulty of access to the pasar in some cases, with a concomitantly greater cost in the cost of transporting materials. Another reason is that some farms are not cultivated more than two years in succession, then allowed to lie fallow an average of seven years, making clearing more difficult.

228 A novel development has been made by Tuai Rumah Asun who alter-
176 nates a 22 acre site at 4½ miles Durin Road between rice and fish. In
243 May, the pegong ikan ("fish pond") is drained and sold on the Sibu market. The grass in the pond is sprayed with herbicides and fired when dry, after which wet rice is planted. When the rice comes to head, the pond is dammed and stocked again with fry that grow, feeding on the rice, and are caught when the pond is drained at the beginning of the next farming year.

243 Within two days of the full moon in June (keleman sehari dua udah
774 bulan kembong) the rice-beds are planted. The life/death motif noted
[22] earlier in the concept of life beginning and ending with rice appears again in the language used for planting the rice-beds. The seed are interred (dikubor, lit., "entombed") that they may rise and give new life

243 242 More serious threats to the rice crops are posed by insects, particularly bengas (leaf and plant hoppers), empangau rungkup (black shield bug), ulat giling (leaf folder), and pasak (stem-borer). Sprays and poisons help to control such pests but a constant vigil must be kept, and occasionally Ibans complain of the loss of their entire crops to [825] these insects. Other insects such as locusts (buntak rusa'), crickets (buntak antu), and grasshoppers (buntak) are gathered by small children and roasted over an open fire.

243 Birds and rats are the other major threats to rice crops in the District, and the damage they may wreak stress the importance of an isochronic fruiting of the rice. For, unless a number of fields come to fruit at about the same time, the predators will concentrate on those crops that fruit either earlier or later than the majority, upon which they will spread themselves out.[13] To protect the rice against these [224] pests numerous devices are employed. Men build traps, such as the tinja', "a spring-pole snare with a tread-board and key-stick' (Freeman 1955:199) and panjok, another type of spring-trap, for catching birds. Young children smear bird-lime (sempulut) on sticks which are secured to the ground or a shrub to catch birds which alight on the gummy bird-lime.

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[13] In one noteworthy attempt at double-cropping, and agronomist at Nanga Mujong, Batang Ballah, found that it is possible to farm twice a year, but only if everyone does it, so that the sparrows eat here and there and don't concentrate on one or two fields.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
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243 According to the studies of some agriculturalists whose conclusions are
242 supported by many Iban farmers, continuous cultivation and fertilization of some types of local soil, far from making the soil infertile and resulting in diminishing yields, rather makes it more fertile with increased yields.

243 In Table 16, the division of labor for wet-rice cultivation at
461 Rumah Nyala, Sungai Aup, is presented together with the average number
462 of man-days per acre in the various activities of farming. The man-days represent an average of the time spent by five families. The days for tasks such as building the farmhouse, weaving, winnowing and storing are pro-rated according to acreage and number of persons involved.

The day at the farm generally is long, workers "going down" (turun) before daylight and not uncommonly returning at sundown. The average work-day is approximately ten hours. Multiplying the average number of man-days by the average work-day, the average number of man-
433 hours invested per acre is 700. At Rumah Nyala, the average yield of padi was 1,106 catties (11.06 piculs) per acre, or about 830 catties of husked rice, which is considerably above the average yield of most other communities in the District.[16]

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[16] The average yield per acre for Rumah Gaong, Sengan, Rumah Inba and Nyelang, Salim was 5.8 piculs per acre or about one-half that of Rumah Nyala in 1970-71.